UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1996/371
23 May 1996
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

LETTER DATED 23 MAY 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

As representative of the State presiding over the statutory bodies of the Commonwealth of Independent States, I have the honour to transmit to you the decision on the presence of collective peace-keeping forces in the conflict zone in Abkhazia, Georgia (annex I), and the declaration of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States on the settlement of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, both adopted at a meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Moscow on 17 May 1996 (annex II).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) S. LAVROV

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Annex I

Decision on the presence of the Collective Peace-keeping Forces in the conflict zone in Abkhazia, Georgia

The Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States,

Desiring to continue the efforts to settle the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia,

Reaffirming its previous decisions aimed at achieving this objective,

Has decided:

1. To add, with the consent of the parties, the following provision to the mandate of the Collective Peace-keeping Forces in Abkhazia, Georgia:

- Demarcation of minefields and mine clearance in the territory of Abkhazia, Georgia, with the assistance of the United Nations and in cooperation with the local authorities.

2. To instruct the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Commonwealth and the Council of Ministers of Defence of the States members of the Commonwealth to pursue their efforts, together with the representatives of the parties, to amplify the mandate of the Collective Peace-keeping Forces in accordance with the decision of 19 January 1996 of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth, entitled "Extension of the presence and the mandate of the Collective Peace-keeping Forces in the conflict zone in Abkhazia, Georgia".

3. To extend the presence of the Collective Peace-keeping Forces in Abkhazia, Georgia, until 19 July 1996.

4. To instruct the parties to the conflict, with the assistance of the Collective Peace-keeping Forces in the conflict zone in Abkhazia, Georgia, to take additional measures to ensure the safety of the personnel of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia in the performance of their duties.

5. To call upon the parties to the conflict to accelerate the negotiations process with a view to ensuring a political settlement with the Russian Federation acting as facilitator.

Done in Moscow on 17 May 1996 in one authentic copy in the Russian language. The authentic copy is deposited with the Executive Secretariat of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which shall send a certified copy of this decision to every State that has signed it.

For the Republic of Armenia:

L. TER-PETROSSIAN

For the Republic of Moldova:

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For the Azerbaijani Republic:

H. ALIYEV

For the Republic of Belarus:

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For Georgia:

E. SHEVARDNADZE

For the Republic of Kazakstan:

N. NAZARBAEV

For the Kyrgyz Republic:

A. AKAYEV

For the Russian Federation:

B. YELTSIN

For the Republic of Tajikistan:

E. RAKHMONOV

For Turkmenistan:

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For the Republic of Uzbekistan:

I. KARIMOV

For Ukraine:

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Annex II

Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States on the settlement of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict

The Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States approves the energetic efforts being made by Russian diplomacy, on the instructions of the President of the Russian Federation, B. N. Yeltsin, to settle the Nagorny Karabakh conflict.

The Council expresses its satisfaction at the confirmation by the top leaders of the parties that they are resolved to maintain the cease-fire achieved two years ago, on 12 May 1994, with the Russian Federation acting as facilitator and with the cooperation of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Minsk Conference of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, until a political agreement on the cessation of the armed conflict is concluded. The Council considers it extremely important to resolve all the disputed issues exclusively by peaceful means.

A major humanitarian and political development was the release and repatriation by the parties to the conflict of all 110 prisoners of war and hostages included in the lists of the International Committee of the Red Cross, which took place during the visit by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation to the Transcaucasus.

The Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States calls upon the parties, on the basis of the good will demonstrated by them, to intensify their efforts to find compromise solutions at the negotiations on a political settlement.

In the course of a peaceful settlement, the parties need to work actively for the restoration of an atmosphere of peace, mutual understanding and harmony, to take steps to prevent and halt acts of passive and active sabotage and of terrorism in the region, and to implement measures for the strengthening of trust and unilateral gestures of good will.

Moscow, 17 May 1996